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Cold Pastoral

• Monty Culver

Houses stood on both faces of the ridge, so that their long, upward-sloping back yards met at the gently curved crest; farther along, where the plateau broadened, was a grassy schoolyard, in season a ball field. All unfenced, the yards made the largest open space in the suburb.

On the first hot day of April the caretaker piloted the mower over the schoolyard. Dandelions sprang and flowered the next day, startling in the morning, little bursts of yellow an inch above the trimmed grass; and violets bloomed that weekend in the mottling of green and yellow.

That hot Sunday afternoon two boys and a girl moseyed across the back yards. They all wore levis and T-shirts; the girl's shirt was fresher than the others, dazzling white in the sun, and her hair a dazzling black. She carried a garden trowel and slapped it against her leg as she walked; she looked down at it when she spoke to the older boy. He was about sixteen, tall and rather heavy, a little stiff now with holding his stomach in. He too looked down when he spoke, sometimes glancing at his hand as it swung close to the girl's.

The younger boy, Dan, fourteen, suddenly leaped in the air and capered ahead of the others, yelling, "Hurry up, slowpoke lovers!"

"Oh, Dan Stokes!" the girl said. She stopped walking and smiled briefly down at the trowel. "I better go back," she said.

"Okay," said the older boy, whose name was Harold. They looked at each other for the first time in minutes, their expressions still inward and a little solemn. After a second he said, "I didn't ask about the car yet. I'll find out."

"Well, I'll probably still be outside," she said. "You find out and call me up or come over." For the first time she really smiled, a flash of small, slightly irregular white teeth in her dark face below the black brows and hair. Then, her tanning cheeks faintly pink, she looked away from him down the hill, but still smiled. After a second her eyes widened a little and she said, "Look there."

Harold turned; a spot of blue down the slope caught his eye, and he stared with mild interest at the back of the last house before the school.

The house belonged to a thirtyish man named Mr. Staley, a lawyer, who now sat on the tiny back porch, slouched in an awkward little captain's chair of metal bars and canvas. The spot of color was the slacks of a slim woman in a white shirt who sat up on the edge of a chaise longue beside him—slacks vertically striped in varying blues that shaded into one another. She sat leaning toward him, holding a glass in one hand and molding air with the other as she talked.

On such an afternoon last summer, Mr. Staley would have been

over by the schoolhouse pitching a whiffle ball to his six-year-old boy or sitting on the porch with his wife. But the woman in the blue slacks was not his wife; Harold knew, from hearing his parents talk, that Mr. Staley's wife had left him a month ago, taking the boy and their two-year-old girl with her.

For a minute Harold and the girl watched the porch, Harold nodding wisely without knowing exactly what he was affirming. The girl murmured, "I wonder if she's the one"; he wondered if she'd heard something he hadn't, but he didn't quite want to ask.

Then she turned back, saying, "Well, you let me know," and he said "Okay, good," importantly, as though complicated arrangements had been made. They were still a second, she looking back toward her home and he taking this chance to look at her, standing on the ridge against the white-filmed blue sky like figures on a glazed urn. Then he said, "Well, I'll call you up or come over," and she looked at him again, flirted her trowel, and started back across the grass, the loose mass of her shining black hair swaying.

He watched her go until she turned to wave back to him; then he looked quickly away. He noticed Dan standing a little way ahead of him, peering up into the leaves of a tree. Harold sneaked up behind him, tiptoeing with exaggerated swoops of legs and arms in case Dan should turn. Now, out of the girl's presence and forgetting his posture, he was clearly rather too heavy; his stomach dragged down the waistband of his unbelted jeans.

He reached Dan without being heard and stood for a second meditating a full nelson; then he bent down, snatched an ankle, spilled the smaller boy to the grass, and fell on top of him, pinning the squirming body with simple weight.

"Hey, come on!" Dan pumped with his legs, trying to turn over, laughing. "Gimme a break, fat stuff! Get that potbelly offa me!"

Harold plucked a dandelion blossom, put the stem in his mouth, and lolled on top of Dan, propping his cheek casually in one hand. "What's that again, baby?"

"I said come on, Slim Jim!" Dan panted, laughing. "Gimme a break, skinny!"

Harold sighed and rolled off him, and they sat up in the grass, exchanged light and tentative swats at each other, and looked around the yards. Down at the home plate end of the ball field, a boy of twelve or so was throwing a baseball in the air and catching it, waiting for someone else to show up. Nearer them, in left field, two children were throwing little balsawood gliders.

"Look at old Staley there," Dan said.

On the porch Staley was leaning forward, tipping his chair with him, to light the woman's cigarette; she tilted her head and guided his hand in hers. After a frozen second he clicked the lighter shut and leaned back abruptly. The boys were far enough along the ridge to see, in the carport beside the house, Staley's middle-aged Fairlane and the woman's car, a powder-blue Buick with the top down.

Now both Staley and the woman stood up, nearly jostling at the door; the boys heard her light, four-syllabled laugh. Then she curved herself onto the chaise longue again, and Staley carried their glasses into the house.

The boys looked at each other with uncommitted faces. Nothing in their experience told them whether to laugh, snigger, or frown; so Harold shrugged, and they looked out across the ball field.

Loitering toward them were the children with the gliders, a girl of four or five in a sunsuit and a shirtless boy about six in red seersucker shorts whose bottoms belled so that his legs looked like flower stems. The girl held her airplane poised before her face and made an engine noise; the boy was still trying to throw his, but it only arched briefly forward and darted its nose into the ground.

"Here y'go, Benny," Harold said. He got up, snatched the plane from the grass ahead of the little boy's hand, and threw it hard straight up. It looped and circled like a bat against the washed sky, then coasted, dipped once, and g l i d e d down smoothly onto the grass. Grabbing it up, Harold caught a violet blossom with it.

"Gee, neat," the little boy said, and Harold threw the airplane again. Dan got up and took the other glider from the fingers of the little girl, who looked at him with her mouth open and put her hands behind her.

"Race you, baby," Dan said, and they wound up theatrically and hurled gliders high out of the shade of the tree; the planes of creamy wood shone, swooping in the sun.

"Lemme try, Harold," the little boy called.

Harold and Dan retrieved the airplanes and flung them up again; this time Harold's arched shortly backwards and crashed, and Dan laughed.

"C'mon, Harold, gimme a try. It's mine," the little boy whined. Down on the porch the man looked sharply up the hill, and the woman stopped talking.

Harold said, "We're havin' races, Benny." He tripped Dan's heels as Dan reached down for his glider, and Dan rolled on the grass, giggling. He got up; they threw the airplanes again and ran to retrieve them.

"Aw, please, Harooold!"

The man stood up and leaned on his arm against the porch pillar; the woman darted erect and stood close beside him, talking.

"Benny, honest, I'm not gonna steal your airplane," Harold said, laughing. "We're just tryin'em out. Give us a break."

"C'mon, Harooold!"

The boys threw the gliders again, and Dan's looped backward into the branches of the tree. The little girl let out a long keening wail, but let it die away as the toy fell rustling loose, hung for a second on a lower branch, and dropped with a last little swoop to the ground. Dan picked it up and straightened its wings.

This time the little boy ran after his, and Harold, grinning, let him approach it and then lunged past him to snatch it up. "Gimme that! That's mine!" the boy cried. Harold held it out at the level of his face; the boy twice jumped vainly for it and then began to struggle with Harold's T-shirt as though trying to climb. "C'mon, Harold! That's mean!" he cried. There was some truth in this, and Harold was about to drop the airplane, when he realized that the boy had stopped climbing and that everyone was looking past him down the slope.

The woman was standing against the porch pillar, her lips slightly open. The man was climbing the pair of stone steps that led up the terrace of his lawn. He trudged slowly, as

though his muscles ached; his head was bent a little and he looked up at Harold from under his eyebrows. He called, "All right, all right."

At the edge of his sight Harold saw Dan drop the girl's glider at her feet. His hand twitched to drop his, but the walking man's weary assurance irritated him, and he held on. "Aw, we're gonna give 'em back," he called, and scowled at the sound of the whine in his voice.

Staley was medium tall, thin, and muscular, with a long bony face and black hair that he brushed back in one wave. As he walked closer, Harold could see that his sunken eyes were red-veined and had dark half-moons under them. He slouched along, but his stomach was flat and hard looking under his sport shirt, and Harold straightened and sucked his belly in.

The silence was too long, and Harold said, "We're not hurtin' nothin'." Behind him he heard Dan breathing; the children made no sound at all. Back by the porch pillar the woman stood with her lips parted; her tongue tip licked slowly across them.

The man was close enough now to speak quietly; it was as though he had waited just for that reason, to save energy. He said, "Come on, kid, you know better than that."

There flashed in Harold's mind the dazzle of the dark girl's hair. He stood, awkwardly frozen, still holding the airplane at the level of his shoulder, and said, "I don't see it's any of *your* business. We're givin' 'em back." His defiance faltered in the middle of the speech, which slackened to a grumble.

The man stood before him in his weary slouch; then suddenly he chopped Harold's wrist with the edge of his hand. The airplane fluttered away and fell. Down the slope the woman glided away from the porch and across the grass toward the steps.

Harold stared into the black-circled eyes. He rubbed his wrist and felt for the first time in a few years—and recognized—the child's surprise at the adult's strength. Then he realized that he was as tall as Mr. Staley and heavier, and that he had the advantage of the direction of the slope. He took a step forward. But the lines and hollows of the man's face were more forbidding than if it had been healthy, and Harold stopped, let his breath out, and dropped his gaze.

The man exhaled sharply too; his hands relaxed and made a single little slapping sound against his pants legs. Starting to turn, he said in the same flat voice, "Okay, fat stuff, from now on, pick on someone your own weight."

Harold straightened himself violently. He felt the weight pulling at the muscles under his belt, and he glanced for some reason down to where the woman was watching with a tart smile. He shouted, with no thought of what he would say, "I don't see why you have to worry about it. I don't see any *your* kids playing around here lately."

The man turned back to him; with the same quickness out of the tired slouch, he slapped Harold. The slope rocked him, and his open hand missed most of the cheek and smacked the sharp edge of the jawbone. It must have hurt the hand; it hurt the jaw, too. One of the small children moaned a little. The woman, standing at the top of the stone steps, jerked her shoulders but made no sound. Harold reached out for the man, who tried to wrestle him to the downward side of the slope. They clutched awkward-

ly for a moment; then Harold yanked an arm loose and lunged, hitting Mr. Staley hard just under the eye. He felt the man stagger, and with a rush of joy in his chest and a flashing of TV brawl scenes behind his eyes, he stepped forward to hit with the other hand.

As he threw the punch, he saw the stumbling man's face, dark-lined and bruised, no longer slack but contorted and appalled; he looked dead.

The sight jarred Harold's arm, and his punch flapped around Mr. Staley's neck. The man caught himself, braced with a leg against the uphill slope, and the quick sharpness came back to his moves. He hit Harold three times in the stomach. The first two struck just above the belt, and hurt; the third hit a little higher, squarely in the solar plexus. A shock of pain and paralysis numbed Harold; he thumped down on his backside, rocked on the grass, and tried to suck air.

The airplane was on the ground near the man's feet. He picked it up and smiled a little. "Lucky we didn't step on it; that would've been it, wouldn't it?" he said to the little boy, handing him the airplane.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Staley," the little boy piped. The girl had moved back close to him, and they stood watching Harold, their mouths slightly open.

The man looked at Harold a second, then at Dan, and oddly dropped his gaze. He turned; again trudging as though he ached, he started back down the slope toward the house. The woman took quick little steps beside him, her hand at first resting lightly inside his arm, then darting up to rest on his shoulder; she angled herself a little ahead of him and talked up to him, smiling. He nodded occasionally, heavy headed.

Dan sat down on the grass beside Harold and a little behind him, leaning forward hesitantly; when he saw Harold begin to breathe more slowly and drop one hand from his stomach, he sat back and glared down the slope. The children looked at each other, closed their mouths, and sidled toward the crest of the hill.

"Dirty son of a bitch," Dan offered.

Harold sat up and glanced at him. "Ah, wasn't anything dirty about it," he said, rubbing his stomach.

"Well, a big guy like that."

"He's all right," Harold said, looking down the slope. The man was back in the chair and the woman was coming out of the kitchen carrying their glasses. The screen door clapped loudly in the still air. "He used to play ball up here with the little kids a lot, I used to see him."

After a silence, looking sidewise at Harold, Dan said, "He sure caught you right in that pot, baby," and giggled.

Harold turned and for an instant his face was purely empty. Then he grinned, and with thumb and forefinger nipped Dan's leg just above the knee. Dan screeched and thrashed away from him.

After a few seconds of flailing at each other, they got up, laughing, and started back along the slope. As the hillside's curve shifted in front of them, they could see the black-haired girl, kneeling on the patio behind her family's house, weeding between the stones. Harold sucked his stomach in. "Aah," he said, letting out a long breath, "I shouldn'ta said nothin' to him like I did."

Down the hill, the woman was

perched now on the lower half of the chaise longue with her feet under her. Her hands dipped and flirted as she talked; her doubled slacks were startling bars of blue in the sun. The man slouched down in the awkward chair, his ankles crossed far in front of him. He nodded.

Between You and Me

• **Samuel Hazo**

A girl in yellow slacks watching me
as I slapped down a dime and palmed the three
lopsided baseballs just before I threw
and three times missed the pyramided pints.
I changed a dollar into dimes and threw
and missed again, but still the girl looked on
like someone waiting to applaud or boo.
Try throwing with a strange girl watching you.

Black-breasted Balinese, a bowl of gourds,
enormous trays for ashes, checkerboards
and dolls attired as duchesses or nuns
sparkled like booty on the winner's shelf.
I threw and threw until my shirtback clung
adhesively and cold against my spine.
It was no more a case of having fun.
I swore I would keep throwing till I won.

I tried with all my will to concentrate
and pitched the final baseball hard and straight
at three damn target pints still left in line.
They broke like bottles shattered by a shot.
I turned to see if Yellow Slacks had seen,
but she was gone, and with her went my need
to win a wreath or some cheap figurine
to show the world, if you know what I mean.

Vogue Patterns

• **Judi Chaffee**

John Sloane sits nervously in the Red Dog, a Philadelphia tavern that he hates, and watches Nancy smear lipstick across her full mouth. In the dim strip of room it looks fluorescent, kodachrome roses against a dark arbor. Soon, he thinks, it will be in pieces all over her teeth. He looks quickly away, fighting the image, around at the room which wears an armadillo coat of celebrities' photographs. "September Song," coming from the piano, and the darkness remind John too much of the bars he frequented in college.

"You *know* you're over the hill when they don't ask for your age card," says Nancy tentatively, hoping to make him smile.

But John, still annoyed, does not answer.

They have just come from the gallery opening of one of his friends. In the back, behind the racks of paintings and the guests, was a paper-covered table with coffee and warm Hawaiian punch, tiny vanilla wafers, cashews, small white mints with globs of jelly inside them. The last thing Nancy said, too-loud, to break his absorption and cover her own unease was "He uses an awful lot of paint. My Lord—why in the world does he waste so much paint?" When everyone else had stopped listening, John murmured, "Is that *all* you ever notice?" and hasn't spoken to her since.

But, passing the Red Dog, they wandered in, silent yet bound by an invisible inner leash.

It is late August and John wears a light blue cord jacket, narrow slacks, a wide, college-striped tie. Nancy has on a jug-brown linen outfit which she made. A limp cardigan dangles over her shoulders, the sleeves dipping around her waist and in and out of the chair spokes. John turns his anger on the sweater; it is baby blue, smudged around the cuffs and has an air, he thinks, of having hung on some hallway hook for years. He frowns at it but says finally instead, "Isn't that blouse supposed to *fit* a little more?"

"Don't ask *me*. You picked out the pattern."

"It looked more tailored on the pattern. It didn't cave in like that in front."

"Well, good grief, John, I'm *not* eight feet tall! Those Vogue patterns are made for somebody built like a phone booth. And hunchbacked."

John laughs but is ashamed of the fact that he also selected the material, that he has lately been supervising her clothes more and more. Both of them accept his premise that he is an artist, that he *should* know more about fabrics and styles—but when he accompanies her to Wanamaker's he waits, playing bored, toying unaesthetically with material bolts while she stands at the pattern rack; he comes over only when she calls him, pretending (to some invisible company) that it is simply to see what she has chosen.

"Is that sweater new?"

She glances down to identify it, looks back to him with a rueful,

ashamed smile. "I just grabbed it; I was in a hurry when you came and I thought it might get cold." She looks down and picks at something on the sleeve, then scratches it vigorously with her nail. Bent over, the sides of her hair are two bleached fields, gutted by the dark root hair which she is letting grow out. Nancy, thirty-six, was married once to an auto mechanic and divorced soon after. She has lived alone for the last ten years and acquired some airs of gentility, the shrewd, bright accurate intelligence of the little-educated, though some traits—her appearance for example—are left behind like old stuffed souvenirs. Her apartment is makeshift, filled with comfortable flowered furniture, bright pillows, ceramic teapots which she never uses, clever stuffed elves. John likes it; his own is like that of a monk. He is three years younger and has never been married.

"My trenchcoat's at the cleaners," she offers.

"Uh-huh." It seems to him that it is constantly at the cleaners, that each coat, in turn, is indisposed just when she really needs it.

They look away from each other. The piano player is getting up from the bench, walking to the bar counter, and there is a click, then electric hum as the jukebox is turned on. *I saw you last night and got that . . .* The waitress brings corned beef sandwiches, sets their pitcher of ale on the table. She returns with two lead-glass mugs, fills each, then leaves. Tiny wall lamps, encased in scarlet, turn their sandwiches ruddy.

Nancy removes the pickle chip and opens up the bread. "Mustard," she says.

"What?"

"I need mustard. For my sandwich."

John looks quickly around the table, sees there is none, looks pained.

"Why do you always hate to ask people for things?" Nancy asks with the sympathetic curiosity of a maiden aunt. "Nobody's going to *eat* you."

"I *don't* hate to ask anybody for *anything*." He turns around on the peg-backed chair, facing a new reel of stars. When a waitress in a black apron passes, he calls, "May we have some mustard please?" certain she is the wrong one.

"S'not my section but I'll bring it for you." She looks tired, kind, answers him on the run.

"See?" says Nancy, as if a blow for human decency has been struck, "People aren't out to get you."

"Just you evidently."

She eats unoffended, eyes on the red meat, but as if she is recalling other, less irritable men.

What the hell, John thinks, how did I ever get mixed up with *her?* He watches her pick up her mug of ale and is critical of the way she holds it with both hands like a child drinking milk, lowering her head to drink with eyes up. He thinks of other girls he has known but remembers unwillingly an occasion of his life when he took a girl he barely knew to a high school party.

John sees again Carolyn Drain, a piano pupil of his mother's, a wraith of a girl with short blonde hair clamped, like a casquetel, to her head, stern Calvinish features, tiny breasts poking like anthills from her turquoise taffeta dress. So mediocre a pair were they, so unexciting, that nobody paid *any* attention to them. Even now, a sudden image of captive balloons, phonograph on a table, white cotton glove-felt, "The Music

Goes Round and Round" can give him the same feeling of lightheadedness he had then, the same sinus headache that drove him home early that night.

"Who's Sonny George?" Nancy asks. She is, welcomely, the antithesis of Carolyn Drain, the girl in the middle of the rowdy popular group.

"Sonny who?"

"In front of you."

He looks above her head, passing window after window of women in white furs, skin crinkled and hair waved, smiles fixed between blackish lips; and men in paper tails who seem to be leaning against Nancy's shoulder. Sonny George, his name flourished over the broad, square tuxedo of bygone days, looks like some kind of comedian; he has a young, open smile that shows that he, as well as his audience, is amazed at what issues from his mouth. He seems to get beside them and say, "Gee! Let's enjoy this miracle *together!*" But John watches him with contempt close to hate, fear, scorn, for he was, after all, a bust.

"He reminds me of George Mooney —that friend of yours," Nancy says. "He has the same kind of head. Like a cauliflower."

John laughs, surprised at her memory, and a minute later in the recognition feels himself on the verge of some shameful and honest confession. Probably about George Mooney. It is a kind of curious, self-abasing pattern that he himself does not understand, but he has told her things, slouched on her sofa-bed, that he would never tell anyone else—how he wet himself during a free school movie, *Heidi*, when he was in the third grade and the whole school found out; how, when he was 16, his mother went with him and a girl he liked to the movies and when he timidly held out his hand to the girl, how his mother began to pinch him scaldingly on the arm. Nancy asked him once if he liked theaters and, to his "Why not?" said simply that he hadn't survived the trauma of birth, that he was trying to crawl back into the womb.

"What's in *there?*" he said.

"Only you."

Yet he pays her back in kind, a fussy sculptor poking a recalcitrant mass of clay. During his diagnoses of Nancy, of her tastes and clothing, she sits very still on the sofa, smoking considerably, pale, deeply hurt. "How can you love me," she asked once, "if you can't stand *me?*"

"I love your essence," he said lightly; but the truth is that he does not, officially, love her—at least in a way that would force him to act upon it. They have lived in the same building for three years but only lately has he been spending much time with her, exposing her to his friends, taking personally the way she looks, realizing her wholesale plagiarism of his ideas on books, plays, art, movies they have seen together. She states these to people authoritatively, not as though they were her opinions but as if they are universal judgments that all educated people must share. Sometimes he is flattered that she, a rough, independent soul, trusts him so completely, more often feels she is just stupid and can only drag both of them down.

"Don't look at me that way," Nancy says, reacting finally. "*God*, you make me feel inferior. I'm *sorry* about the *sweater*."

John's heart turns toward her, disowning his sophistication, as it always does when she asserts her feelings. She is so real, he thinks, so

open, so unpretentious, so *good* (though she tends to forget to take out her garbage, though she stumbles to the door in pajamas, hair frowzy, smoking, when he stops by before work to make plans with her, though she insists on wearing old cottons too low-necked and too long). She is so much herself, and bravely, that he wants to put his arms around her bony back, feel her trembling in this cage he makes, and reassure her.

"You want something else?" he asks. "More ale?"

She shakes her head but as she reaches into her lap for her purse, starts to stand up, her brown eyes fill with tears. Several splash across her face.

"Nance? Don't."

"I'm *not*. I'm just sick and tired of going on and on and on. That's all. I'm getting *old*, John, I can't live like this forever. One of these days I'll wake up in some shabby resident's hotel; I'll be heating tea in my room, living on eggs and chipped *beef*." Elbow on the table, she puts her fist to her forehead to shield her eyes, and her personal nightmare, from him. John is embarrassed for her, his skin crawls with pity, for he is able to picture her in just such a place, slovenly and puttering around. It is like discovering a close friend is impotent. He knows that the people around them think her bowed head, weeping, are part of a lover's quarrel, and he shudders because they are not.

"Want a kleenex?"

"Uh-huh. Oh—thanks."

He hands her a linen cloth instead.

"Listen." He is about to say what he should say and almost wants to, what *she* wants him to say, when across his mind walks the girl with the shining, swinging hair who needs no excuse, no conditions; a creature of Holly Golightly delight, bright intelligence, deep perception, the everybody's darling who wants only him. The girl who will find human shape, crawl out from the covers, just as it is too late.

Nancy watches steadily, as if she can tell what is in his mind. "I love you."

"My head is killing me," he says. "Three layouts due tomorrow and I'm coming on faint."

"Sinus?"

"Uh-huh."

"Well, let's go, then. Come to my place—just for a little while."

"Just for a minute, Nance. All I really want is sleep."

"Collapse on my couch if you want."

"We'll see." He knows that she, too, is afraid, afraid of the dark of her own apartment, and sees them as two animals sinking slowly into the ancient tarhole where all mankind has disappeared, sees them reaching for one another like trapped and lonely beasts.

Balance in Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*

• Thomas F. Smith

The ending of Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* has always caused controversy. Some critics interpret Isabel's decision as a flaw in the heroine or as a flaw in the novel as a whole. Oscar Cargill, for example, foresees Isabel leading a "fleshless existence," and he warns the reader that "to assume that the heroine has the novelist's approval in her dramatic return is to assume much too much." Arnold Kettle interprets Isabel's decision as a death wish—"she is turning her face to the wall." Marion Montgomery feels that structural defects in the novel make Isabel's decision "romantically conceived" and "unjustified." Perhaps the most scathing of all recent comments, however, is Rebecca Patterson's judgment that Isabel's *not* returning to Rome "would have been the uprooting of her neuroticism."[1]

Against these views there have been many attempts to defend and even praise Isabel's decision. Isabel's most recent apologists have been Father Vincent Blehl (she "has met her fate and triumphed over it") and Joseph Ward (Isabel learns that "the ultimate achievement in life is the preservation of the integrity of the human character"). In addition, Richard Poirier has tried to demonstrate that "Isabel's action at the end is fully consistent with everything that she does earlier," and Lyall Powers suggests "that her return does mark the gaining of a new innocence."[2]

I think that these latter critics come closer than the first group to a proper reading of James's novel. The purpose of my article, however, is not to go over what they have said, but to draw attention to a particular stylistic and thematic device which seems to be designed to strengthen the impression that Isabel's decision is necessary, reasonable, and praiseworthy. In James's use of compound sentences, in his repeated reference to "half" and "middle," there is suggested a theme running through the novel which I call the theme of "balance." The significance of the ending becomes clear if one looks at much of what has gone before in these terms—an attempt by Isabel to maintain a balance between natural enthusiasm and civilized restraint, between impulsive actions and good intentions, between naive oversimplification and tenuous hair-splitting. That this attempt is sometimes foolish cannot be denied, but, by the time the novel ends, Isabel's attempt has become an intelligent, purposeful conviction.

A good clue to the theme of balance is provided right at the beginning —James's description of the five o'clock tea on the lawn of the Touchett estate. Balance receives thematic utterance in what James calls "the perfect middle of a splendid summer afternoon." He goes on to say: "Part of the afternoon had waned, but much of it was left, and what was left was of the

finest and rarest quality. Real dusk would not arrive for many hours; but the flood of summer light had begun to ebb, the air had grown mellow, the shadows were long upon the smooth, dense turf." The richness and yet the brevity of this time in a summer afternoon fit in nicely with what the novel is to develop—the richness of Isabel's character which Ralph perceives so quickly and the ironic shortness of the time when she is able to capitalize on that richness. Then, too, the actual structure of these sentences reinforces the theme of balance—compound sentences, with the first declarative clause qualified by the conjunction *but* and a second clause modifying (balancing) the first. It is not accidental that this novel contains many such sentences, sentences that seem to say, "It is not this extreme, and it is not that extreme, but rather it is something in between," something like "the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea."

Another indication of the balance theme in *The Portrait* can be found at the beginning of Chapter 15. It is the scene in London on a September afternoon when Ralph teases Isabel's friend Henrietta Stackpole with the claim that "there wasn't a creature in town." Ralph is being ironic, of course, but whether or not he means what he says, his thought might stand for one social extreme—the aristocratic snob. Henrietta rises to the bait and, true to her belief in democracy, sarcastically replies, "There's no one here, of course, but three or four millions of people." Henrietta definitely means what *she* says, and her words sum up the attitude of a directly opposite social extreme—the equalitarian common man. Admittedly, Isabel takes no part in this little skirmish, but perhaps even her silence is a sign that her own tastes lie somewhere in between. James himself goes on to use the ambiguous phrase "huge, half-empty town," although I think it can be explained by looking to the balance theme. That is, for Isabel (here implicitly and elsewhere more explicitly), social life means no commitment to an extreme. One critic, describing Isabel before her marriage, claims that "she belongs, as she says, 'quite to the independent class,' meaning that she belongs to no class at all in the commonly accepted meaning of the term."[3]

More important for the development of the story itself, however, is the scene immediately following in which Ralph and Isabel talk about her character and her plans for the future. We have to keep in mind that Isabel has just rejected two suitors. The one, Lord Warburton, represents a call to a comparatively confined life among the English ruling class; the other, Caspar Goodwood, represents a call to a life of another type of confinement in an American upper middle-class business society. James had earlier described this situation in spatial terms that are significant: "for however she might have resisted conquest at her English suitor's large quiet hands, she was at least as far removed from the disposition to let the young man from Boston take positive possession of her." Isabel declines both offers and chooses to keep her freedom and see what the future holds for her. All of this is pleasing to Ralph, and he compliments Isabel: "You want to see life. . . . You've told me the great thing: that the world interests you and that you want to throw yourself into it." Isabel is too deliberate a creature, perhaps, to "throw" herself into anything (at least to the extent that Ralph's words seem to imply),[4] but his words do bring to a close the first important

part of the novel. We have had a preliminary look at what sort of woman Isabel is; now the question becomes—After rejecting two suitors (two ways of life), what will Isabel do with her future? Will she be able to win and hold what I have summed up in the word *balance?*

Isabel decides to marry Gilbert Osmond, and this choice has caused almost as much trouble for the critics as her later decision to return to her husband. Kettle, for instance, considers her marriage "the most difficult moment in the book" and suggests that it is "a fraud perpetrated upon us for his own ends by the author. . . ."[5] Montgomery argues that the portrait of Isabel after marriage is quite different from the portrait before marriage, resulting in "two portraits of Isabel Archer rather than one, the first being considerably out of proportion to the second."[6] These views, however, tend to overlook—among other things—the consistency of the balance motif. When Osmond courts Isabel, he holds out to her this promise: "My dear girl, I can't tell you how life seems to stretch there before us—what a long summer afternoon awaits us. It's the latter half of an Italian day—with a golden haze, and the shadows just lengthening, and that divine delicacy in the light, the air, the landscape, which I have loved all my life and which you love today." This passage is reminiscent of the novel's opening passage and that "hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea." Osmond's words picture a way of life characterized by "divine delicacy"—just the sort of life Isabel has been trying to win for herself. It is no accident in the overall scheme of the novel that Osmond here uses phrases like "latter half" and shadows "just lengthening"; it is no accident that these phrases have a decisive effect upon Isabel.

The implications of Isabel's decision finally become manifest to her at a time when the theme of balance becomes more explicit than usual. That is the "recognition" scene in Chapter 42, where (in James's words in the Preface) Isabel "sits up, by her dying fire, far into the night, under the spell of recognitions on which she finds the last sharpness suddenly wait. . . . It (the scene) is obviously the best thing in the book, but it is only a supreme illustration of the general plan." To this last claim for the scene, I want to add, for my own purposes, a strong "Amen."

The scene opens with Isabel's consideration of Lord Warburton's motives behind his attentions paid to Pansy. Isabel contemplates all the possibilities and then characteristically concludes that "Warburton was as disinterested as he need be, and she was no more to him than she need wish. She would rest upon this till the contrary should be proved. . . ." This is a variation on the sentences in the novel's opening scene—the declarative statement balanced with and modified by a second declarative statement. Here the sentence structure mirrors the working of Isabel's mind. Once this mind has been stirred to careful contemplation, it inevitably moves on to consider the more serious problem of Isabel's relationship with her husband. Notice, for instance, the balance in Isabel's new awareness that "instead of leading to the high places of happiness . . . (her confidence had led) rather downward and earthward, into realms of restriction and depression . . . ." (These last, of course, are the sort of extreme conditions which Isabel has been trying to avoid.) In the moments that follow, there is a balancing of opposite pulls on Isabel's

interest: first, the shortcomings of Osmond that have come to light since the marriage began—"she simply believed that he hated her . . . she had mistaken a part for the whole"; and then the various attractions which Osmond had held for her during the courtship period—"a certain combination of features had touched her, and in them she had seen the most striking of figures." But, and this is most important for an understanding of the drama unfolding before the reader's eyes, through statement and counter-statement Isabel is working relentlessly to a fuller awareness of her situation: "Nothing was a pleasure to her now; how could anything be a pleasure to a woman who knew that she had thrown away her life?" Earlier Ralph Touchett had praised Isabel for "throwing" herself into the world, and now she feels that her life has been "thrown away." If Ralph had been a little too optimistic, Isabel here is perhaps a little too pessimistic. As events turn out, it can be shown that, while Isabel has made a grievous mistake about Osmond, she can, through a careful choice among alternatives, retrieve much of what she considers "thrown away."

I would also draw attention to how James finishes the description of this scene:

> . . . she lingered in the soundless saloon long after the fire had gone out. There was no danger of her feeling the cold; she was in a fever. She heard the small hours strike and then the great ones, but her vigil took no heed of time. Her mind, assailed by visions, was in a state of extraordinary activity, and her visions might as well come to her there, where she sat up to meet them, as on her pillow, to make a mockery of rest. As I have said, she believed she was not faint, and what could be better proof of it than that she should linger there half the night, trying to persuade herself that there was no reason Pansy shouldn't be married as you put a letter in the post office? When the clock struck four, she got up; she was going to bed at last, for the lamp had long since gone out and the candles burned down to their sockets. But even then, she stopped again in the middle of the room and stood there gazing at a remembered vision—that of her husband and Madame Merle unconsciously and familiarly associated.

Note again the use of long, well-balanced sentences; note too that Isabel has been here "half the night," and, when she finally does arise, she pauses "again in the middle of the room." I suggest that these references to "half" and "middle"" are not accidental; they recur throughout the novel in meaningful places. In the novel's opening scene, James describes "the perfect middle" of a summer afternoon; in the London scene there is a significant disagreement over such phrases as "half-empty town." Osmond seduces Isabel with the prospect of a life like "the latter half of an Italian day," and, in the scene just discussed, carefully balanced sentences reflect Isabel's mind working to a more exact awareness of her condition.

Isabel's awareness grows even more precise in the succeeding days; finally, the telegram about Ralph's approaching death and the Countess Gemini's relations about Osmond and Madame Merle force Isabel's hand. She cannot submit to her husband's will, but neither can she actually leave Osmond. Isabel postpones a final decision by choosing a middle course—to go to her dying cousin, not because he is her lover, but because he is her friend. On the train ride from Rome to Paris, however, Isabel has a chance to collect her thoughts and to speculate about the life that lies before her. It is characteristic of Isabel that she considers various alternatives, but finally moves away from extremes. At first, she is deeply morose about her future —"To cease utterly, to give it all up . . . ," but then she works herself to an unduly optimistic attitude—". . . she should someday be happy again." The final realization, however, is that her future is to be neither of these things, but rather that "she should last to the end. Then the middle years wrapped her about again and the gray curtain of her indifference closed her in." Pessimism gives way to optimism, and both in turn give way to "indifference" —an attitude not only *between* these other two attitudes, but also *above* (i.e., superior to) them. This indifference comes over Isabel now, and it is also the basic attitude she will want to mark the "middle years" which immediately await her. It is not an attitude to be equated with docile passivity, but rather one that will keep her from the naive expectations of her first days in Europe and yet raise her above the ugly revelations about her husband. The middle years will see an attempt at a middle course.

Admittedly, James does not lavish as much attention on this passage as he does on some others—the "recognition" scene in Chapter 42, for instance. Nevertheless, Isabel's inclination to pursue a middle course of "indifference" prepares for the last two important scenes in the novel—scenes where her "indifference" is to be tested by powerful emotional experiences. The first of these experiences, the talk with Ralph in Chapter 54, represents a call from the past, a call from what might have been; on his deathbed Ralph finally confesses that he has always "adored" Isabel. On her part, however, she cannot look back on their relationship as a case of star-crossed lovers. As deeply as she feels for Ralph, Isabel just cannot put that interpretation on the past. Her last words to Ralph ("Oh my brother!"), spoken at a time when her feeling might most control her, indicate how she regards their relationship.

The second test, of course, is Caspar Goodwood's plea to come away with him, and it is far more powerful than a temptation to look to the past as frustrated romance. Goodwood's kiss symbolizes a call to the future, a call to what might yet be. As I have already indicated, many critics consider it a flaw in Isabel that she does not respond to this call. I have been trying to show, however, that the balance theme strongly suggests that Isabel must (and should) reject Goodwood's plea. Surely there must have raced through Isabel's mind the remembrance of other extreme reactions to an unsatisfactory marriage—her aunt skipping aimlessly around the world, her sister-in-law chattering away and having no one's respect, and Madame Merle resorting to deceit to accomplish her ends. No, Isabel "knew now. There was a very straight path." She would return to Osmond; this would be her middle course, this would be the best way to restore some degree of balance to her life. Go-

ing to Rome would not be easy; Isabel had no illusions about life with her husband. Any other choice, however, would be deliberate upsetting of this balance; in the repeated references to "half" and "middle," in the style of his sentences, and in the pattern of Isabel's actions, Henry James is telling us that there could be no other conclusion for *The Portrait of a Lady.*

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[1]Cargill, "*The Portrait of a Lady*: A Critical Reappraisal," *MFS*, III (1957), 29; Kettle, *An Introduction to the English Novel*, II (London, 1953), 31; Montgomery, "The Flaw in the Portrait: Henry James vs. Isabel Archer," *UKCR*, XXVI (1960), 218; Patterson, "Two Portraits of a Lady," *Midwest Quarterly*, I (1960), 361.

[2]Blehl, "Freedom and Commitment in James's *The Portrait of a Lady*," *The Personalist*, XLII (1961), 381; Ward, *The Imagination of Disaster*: *Evil in the Fiction of Henry James* (Lincoln, Neb., 1961), p. 49; Poirier, *The Comic Sense of Henry James* (London, 1960), p. 246; Powers, "*The Portrait of a Lady*: 'The Eternal Mystery of Things,'" *NCF*, XIV (1955), 153.

[3]Poirier, p. 218.

[4]Cf. Leon Edel's analysis of Isabel in *Henry James*: *The Conquest of London* (Philadelphia, 1962): "She tries very hard to see, at every turn, the roads before her—and in broad daylight. She is supremely cautious in action, for one so daring in her fancy" (p. 424).

[5]*An Introduction to the English Novel*, II, 30.

[6]"The Flaw in the Portrait . . . ," p. 220.

Thirteenth Station

• Edward Morin

Hands plying the dead bird's dry slippery wings
cannot make the holder see in ruffled down
life's full snap of flight, and wind fast blown
around hummock of protruded bone sings
wood on wood creaking into the swings
of the duped lark's song; haunting the nest alone,
she feels vultures' shadowy arches in her tone—
the dirge of passage curbed instinct rings.

The *Pietà* must be stone or some cold
pigment worthy of insensibility.
Let future workmen strike all who behold
with chips of fervor, passion, loyalty
from their own brains; here, no buoyant Soul bound
to a dove's back, only heavy, heavy—

Ever Since Angie

• Madeleine Costigan

I've known Angie all my life, or at least every summer of my life. Why a guy like me with three older sisters to bother him would pick Angie for a friend, I'll never tell you. I mean I don't know. With amateur psychoanalysis becoming such a fad, I've started watching what I say. I guess I picked her because she was there. Anyway, that summer when she was fifteen and I was thirteen was actually quite poignant. I've read up on things like that since then. I have a lot of time to read, because we live on an island that is practically deserted all winter.

Next winter I won't be here. I'll be away at college, and I'm looking forward to it, which I can't explain since winter is now my favorite season here. I've outgrown this place, I guess, just the way I outgrew Angie —incompletely. I've never made a clean break from anybody or anything that was important to me.

Angie used to say I took people too seriously. It was infuriating the way she insisted on oversimplifying me. I've always been a rather complex personality, deep and introspective, subtle and sensitive, qualities Angie never even apprehended, much less comprehended. The trouble was that people took *me* too seriously, an obvious truth that never even occurred to Angie. Nobody ever expects me to be joking, which is quite unfortunate since actually I'm very witty. Maybe if I didn't wear glasses—

Yet, except for the fact that she was a girl, Angie could be a very satisfactory friend. She had a lot going for her, even then. For one thing, she could pick up a live crab and hold it so that it wouldn't bite. There's something to be said for a girl like that. She was strong too. Once she got that l i f e s a v i n g badge, she thought she was stronger than the ocean.

Frankly, I resented that badge. Maybe I had a premonition from the beginning that it meant trouble. And then that day we stole the life preservers from the old wreck, the day Angie saved my life, and Steve Conrad came up and congratulated her— well that was a cold day.

The summer began like all the others, except that Angie had that badge pinned right on her bathing suit. Most mornings we'd get up early and watch the fishing boats come in. We'd pack a lunch of peanut butter sandwiches and water. The bottle of water we'd bury in the wet sand to keep cool, and then we'd go sit on the boats and watch the men sort fish. We lived in our bathing suits and bare feet, just beachcombing or digging clams, whatever we felt like.

I remember walking up to the beach that day. It's a very independent feeling walking along a hot tar road barefoot in the sunshine. The tar stretches and feels cushiony and soft under your feet except where the stones work through. Sometimes a car riding along the shoulder splashes some gravel on to the road. But it couldn't bother us, the soles

of our feet were tougher than shoeleather. I remember it very clearly because I was happy. Whenever I'm happy, I like to make a note of it then and there. I don't think there's anything quite so stupid as looking back on something pleasant and wondering why I didn't realize how happy I was. Whenever I'm happy, I always know.

And then that life preserver floated away. We were out in the ocean, barely in sight of shore. I got panicky. I can't swim but I can tread water very well. I could probably tread water all the way to Portugal, if the current were going that way. Angie swam over to me and I grabbed hold of her. As soon as I touched her, she went under deliberately. I think she couldn't wait to go under, she was so proud of that badge. Once she did that, I wasn't panicky anymore—I was furious. I needed one clean gulp of air. If she could have just held still for a m i n u t e while I breathed, but no, I opened my mouth to spit out a mouthful and that's the time she picked to go under again.

"*You stupid Angie. You'll drown us both.* I was so mad at her for pulling that lifesaving technique on me, but it was like trying to run in a dream. I couldn't risk opening my mouth again or using any breath talking.

Finally, a big wave threw us both up on the beach. I just flopped where I landed and hoped I wouldn't wash back, but Angie was making a speech.

"Eliot, you're an accident on its way to happen," she said to me. I think she was infatuated with that expression, she used it so much. She had a way of doing that, thinking up stupid expressions and then using them in six different situations to express six different ideas. I think she was looking for the universal comment. It was so important to her to resist fad expressions. She couldn't stand being just like everybody else. I used to worry about her. She wasn't bright enough to be that proud.

"You both all right?" I didn't even know anybody else was there until I heard him talking. I looked up just enough to see the voice belonged to a guy who was wearing shoes on the beach—not sneaks—the kind you shine.

"We're fine," Angie said.

He must have noticed the lifesaving badge because he knew what tack to take all right.

"You saved his life," he said. "You were great, really great."

"Do you mean it?" The only reason Angie asked the question was so he could tell her again, but he was smart, he didn't exactly overdo it.

"You did just right," he said. "Besides if I had to rescue you, I'd have been late for work."

"Maybe you'd better hurry," I suggested.

"Where do you work?" Angie wanted to know.

"Up there." He pointed to the slate, gray roof of the fishery. "I drive the beach buggy."

"What time is it?" I asked. It seemed like a good question.

"Almost one." The way he looked at his watch you'd think he was going to cross-examine it. "I'm glad I didn't have to take a swim so soon after lunch," he said to Angie. And then he looked at me and said, "See you around," and off he went, his shoes squeaking right along over the sand.

"That was Steve Conrad," Angie said.

"How do you know?"

That Angie, she could be shrewd. When she didn't want to answer a

question, and when she didn't know the answer to a question, she could manage the same simple look on her face.

"I just know," she said.

"That's nice. That's very nice."

"Yes, isn't it? He's right of course. I did save your life."

I just looked at her. "If you don't mind, I think I'll take a walk," I said.

"I don't mind, Eliot. I don't mind," she told me. And I don't mind saying I've always thought it rude to be that truthful.

Shortly after that, Angie stopped eating peanut butter. "If there's anything a lady shouldn't live on, it's peanut butter and water," she said the very next day. I've matured a lot since then. I know, because at that time the overtones of that statement were completely lost on me. It surprises me now to realize how little insight I had. Now I believe that giving up peanut butter is as significant an act as severing the umbilical cord. A girl doesn't quit peanut butter because she stops liking it, but because she is suddenly aware of other things she likes more with which the love of peanut butter conflicts and what's more doesn't hold a candle to. I have a very analytical mind and things like this appeal to me. I'll never understand why I missed the implications of that remark that day.

In fact my first reaction was one of practical gratitude. I ate Angie's sandwiches and then stretched out on the beach and was perfectly happy just feeling the sun soaking into the backs of my legs. Then Steve came along and said hello to Angie. Angie was sitting a good twenty feet from me. I was too drowsy to move, but with my head pressed against the sand like that, I could hear everything very clearly anyway.

Angie didn't sound like herself at all. What a pair of adolescents they were, especially Angie, a real textbook case.

"No wonder you get up so early in the morning," Steve said. "All you do is sit on the beach all day."

And that's when Angie went into this routine.

"That's how much you know," she said. "I'm sifting sand." The sand was crusty and she broke off a lump and worked it through her fingers. It was just the stupid sort of conversation that would appeal to him. He was just as bad.

"Somebody has to sift the sand," he said.

"Yes, it's my responsibility. I'm responsible for a lot of things around here." She kept bobbing her head around, really pleased with herself.

He lit up a cigarette and smoked it. It required all his concentration for awhile. Not exactly an unrehearsed activity, I was sure. Just the way he wore that faded plaid sportshirt and khakis, too casual.

"I suppose you play football." This was about as subtle as Angie could ever get. What she meant was "My, what broad shoulders you have."

As soon as she asked the question, I thought of that nice, sincere smile he used to show off those smooth, even white teeth. With teeth like that, he couldn't possibly play football.

"Last year I played on the freshman team. But I'm trying for varsity."

Then another possibility occurred to me. Very likely they weren't his teeth. I wondered how Angie would like getting kissed by a boy with false teeth. That Angie, she wouldn't know the difference. She is so naive.

I was d i s a p p o i n t ed when he changed the subject to cars. Somehow, until he mentioned his father's chevy, I pictured the two of them cruising along the boulevard in the beach buggy, which wasn't very practical considering he hadn't even asked her for a date yet. But it's typical of me. I have a habit of spending my time thinking about things that probably won't happen. He did ask her to go to the movies, though. They made a date for Friday night, and then Steve left to get back to the fishery, wearing those same squeaky shoes.

There was only one thing I enjoyed about that conversation. And that was I knew *Pinocchio* was playing at the movies Friday night. Not exactly sophisticated comedy.

Down at the end of Angie's street, which is also my street, we have a lagoon. Right beside the lagoon is an enormous pile of logs the size of telegraph poles. Except for the smell of creosote, which is always very strong, they make a pleasant place to sit on a summer night. So Friday night, along about eleven thirty, I took a walk down there, and just sat and relaxed enjoying a good view of the lagoon and Angie's house, which showed up very clearly in the sweep of the streetlight. The night was warm, with a land breeze blowing across the bay playing the electric wires.

It wasn't long before they came along. I watched them get out of the car and walk up to the house, past the wet leaves of the hydrangeas that bunch out over the walk, and the white nasturtiums that shine in the dark. That west breeze always means mosquitoes. Angie's mother had the porch light on, and I knew they'd be flocked around it. Just a little thing like a land breeze or an ocean breeze can make the difference in a moment like that. I watched Steve slap at a mosquito on his arm, and they must have been nipping around Angie's legs like crazy. The two of them were standing there swinging away after awhile. It just didn't have the makings of a romantic moment. He didn't even try to kiss her. And she didn't stand there talking for very long either, for which I was grateful because I was getting a little chewed too.

The next day, Steve's day off, he came up the beach. I was sitting right beside Angie. She'd weakened on the peanut butter sandwiches, and the two of us were sitting there having lunch. Angie hadn't been near the water all morning, and she had a fancy straw hat on to protect her from the sun. Angie's one of those redheads that just burns and peels all summer long. As soon as he got there, she pulled out a bottle of suntan lotion and asked him to do her back. Peanut butter and the smell of that stuff is really some combination.

"Did you kiddies enjoy the show last night?" I asked them.

"I did." Angie said.

"So'd I." Steve didn't miss any cues. I'll say that for him.

"*Pinocchio*, huh?" I thought I said that with just the right note of superiority.

"Yeah." Steve said. "That's a story about a puppet that's made from a tree called the Pin Oak."

Well, all right, I was willing to laugh. I suppose it was funny, but Angie laughed and laughed, and she laughed much too loud. She does that when she's nervous. Then for the next hour Angie couldn't go swimming because she had just had her lunch. I was really bored with

the two of them. But it was like reading a book I didn't like—I had to know what the end was. One thing about love, it feels a lot different from the way it looks.

Some greenhead flies were buzzing around because of the crumbs, and finally one landed on Angie.

"Get that fly on my back, please, Steve?"

As I said, I was sitting right beside her. I began to feel invisible, like I didn't even exist. I do have some pride, so I left.

The rest of the summer went more or less that way. Angie slept later in the mornings because she was out later at night. She never went swimming before lunch time anymore because sometime Steve came up the beach to have lunch with us and her hair had to look nice everyday just in case.

There were two things I really hated. One was that Angie never really talked to me anymore, and the other thing was, she did talk to Steve. It developed into a really monotonous summer. Angie spent everyday being extremely happy or extremely miserable depending on Steve. Angie wasn't the only girl Steve dated, and this bothered her. She didn't mind his going out with other girls so much. What really got through to her was that nobody else was asking her for dates. This wasn't as much of a reflection on Angie as it might seem. There really wasn't anybody else much around, and Angie wouldn't settle for just anybody anyway. I asked her to go to the movies one night, and she just said, "Oh, don't be silly, Eliot."

And then she took it into her head that I was the discouraging factor, as she put it. She decided that nobody else would ever get interested in her so long as I was taking up so much of her time and discouraging opportunities. That was spelling out the handwriting on the wall pretty plainly, even for me. I don't believe in being overly sensitive, but for the next ten days I ignored Angie. I worked hard clamming and selling my clams to Nick, Steve's boss up at the fishery, and just enjoyed how nice it felt to succeed at something. I even developed a touch of ambition once I discovered money was something I could accumulate if I counted on it. Basically, I've always been a collector. Angie and I used to collect shells, and then later it seemed like the sort of thing summer people do, so we switched to stones. I never considered Angie summer people. She was, of course, and I realized it one of those days I spent clamming.

I remember it was the end of a good day. I had a sack full of clams, and I sat down on the muddy sand at the mouth of the lagoon watching the sun sink. I thought about it being the last week of August. Angie would be leaving soon, and winter was coming. I made up my mind I liked winter. As I said, it's now my favorite season here.

After awhile I got up and hauled the sack of clams up to the fishery. Nick was busy with a customer. While I was waiting, I heard Steve Conrad talking to somebody back in the ice room.

"Hey, Steve, no date tonight?"

"No." Just no. Just like that.

"How about Angie? Where's Angie?"

"Angie?" Steve said. Like he was really concentrating. Angie who? Angie who? I mean there were so many Angies he was taking out all summer!"

"You know, Angie?"

And then he got an inspiration. "Oh, *Angie,* the little redhead." He laughed a minute. And then he laughed some more. "That Angie, what a kid. There's a girl that if you say, 'I'm gonna throw myself in the bay after you go home,' she believes you."

Then they both laughed. It was a good thing Nick was ready to pay me then, because otherwise I might have been tempted to go back there and punch him in the mouth. Right in those phony teeth of his. The trouble is I'm too civilized.

He had his nerve making a crack like that. Somebody ought to tell Angie what he said, but if I did, she'd think I was jealous. I decided to take a walk over to Angie's anyway, but the truth is I didn't feel the same about Angie anymore. When I think of the way she treated me. It's really had a traumatic effect on me. I've met a lot of girls since that summer, but I don't consider even one of them a friend of mine. In fact, ever since Angie, I've stopped thinking of girls as friends.

Hekate's Song

• **Suzanne Gross**

I am Kore who walk the college
paths at the river's cliff with braided
children hand-in-hand. A fill my arms

with crimson flowers for a queen. Earth
gapes for me, his glittering horses
foam across my shoulders, and he shuts

me in his ringed hands. I am so his
rich and lonely underground. I am
Kore, I am Demeter who stand

beside you at the smoking gate, who
wait to board the snowbound Fisherman.
Northward I flee him by seas of sweet

water. No one in the station sees
the stallion rise from the waves but I,
the mare Demeter by the lakeshore.

Now, traveller, what do you ask me?
I go to his caverns and his sea.
I bore him a foal gifted with speech.

Administrative Crisis

• Richard E. FitzGerald

The two men seated opposite—the dominant one in a red leather high-backed chair and dressed out of Fifth Avenue, whose facial movements pronounced the greatest self-esteem—looked handshakes across the neatly stacked, trophied desk, with the narrow-guage and not unkindly expression of conspirators; until the esteemed one released a subdued "Hooray," with his eyes and arms lifted. Then one arm broke down and, bending, opened an imitation panel at the right base of the finely worked mahogany.

"Straight or mixed? We can't let the event slip without a toast."

He didn't wait to see his associate's approving nod and flashing eyes. Banning had heard about President Condrip's secret store, but had never been near enough the throne to witness the unearthing.

"They ought to dedicate it to you," Banning said.

"The gymnasium? For five million smackers, I'll have 'em slice my name into the cornerstone." More expressive handshakes passed between them. Condrip had done it again.

"It's a regular empire integrating around you, Frank," said Banning, prospective fellow deer hunter and present Assistant Chairman of the Department of Political Science. It went over. The President glowed.

"It took a little doing, George; all good things do, as you now so well know. A discreet call here, a citation and offer of an honorary degree there—never mind, the money's nearly in our coffers. We'll be the richest institution. Gymnasiums are the drawers today. Ours'll have everything, including the best basketball squad to be found in the Middle West. Mark me." President Condrip watched Dr. George Banning throw off his second shot, and sipped his own glass dry.

"I won't forget your part, George."

Banning beamed, as he listened.

"It was your front-office contacts and follow-up tactics with Finley that're bringing Finley himself here this afternoon to cement the deal. Only paper-signing formalities. We're in!"

Suddenly the door flew open. Miss Tifford, the President's secretary, stood wavering, wide-eyed, her glasses askew, before the two startled men. Banning's eyes went first to the liquor; the President's fell mercilessly upon the lightless intercom box and then upon the aging, quavering woman, nervously babbling something about bride—no, McBride.

"A student, sir, a student's outside," she stammered. But before she had it out, a youngster stood shouting in the open door.

"Doctor McBride's holding a gun on his class. He's mad. He's screaming and threatening to shoot the first student who tries to get out. He—" Both men were on their feet.

"All right. Shut the door," the President bellowed in a fury that brought the student to himself as quickly as if he himself had been fired at. It shut.

"Shoot them?" broke from Ban-

ning's lips. But the attention of the impressive executive moving from behind the mahogany fell heavily upon the breathless woman who watched him start for the door.

"Get yourself under control, Henrietta," Condrip pronounced over one shoulder.

"What'll we do?" she asked, stumbling after the two men.

"Call Captain Morrison of the Metropolitan Barracks. Then get Bettman in Maintenance. Tell him to get his biggest lugs over to Reeves Hall —emergency. Tell him to clear the rest of the building, but to leave McBride's class alone. First find out where McBride is." He half-turned. "All right, don't just stand there. Get to it! Come on, Banning."

"He's got a gun. He'll kill you," she wailed at the shut door.

Word had got around. Astonished shouts rose here and there. The two men were trotting along the first floor corridor of Administration Hall; a student inattentively falling under their prow was upset by the momentum. One cracked voice shouted to somebody down the long corridor that McBride had turned maniac. The men were out of the building and running.

They had no difficulty finding the trouble. A kind of tornado passage swirled down the campus of students in flux and opened at the steps of Reeves Hall. A crowd had gathered at right angles to the approach under one of the rooms and was alternately looking up to windows in the second floor and shaking their heads at companions.

"It'd be 200 Reeves, top of the stairs to the right," Banning muttered. Some heads began to turn and bodies give way as the runners plunged down the building-access. Banning breathed something incoherently to C o n d r i p. And added, "What'll we do if he turns the gun on us?"

No one paid any attention to new May flowers colorfully knit along the lawn margins. The afternoon had grown partly overcast, relieved by vague blue scatterings. Ahead, a high-pitched, inarticulate voice was spilling out of a series of windows above the crowded walk.

At the front doors a dense group opened—too slowly—to the insistent pair, who finally began to beat their way through, crying, "Stand Aside! Stand Aside!"

"Where is he?"

"Top of the steps, Dr. Condrip. You'd better hurry," someone blurted. The student tried to follow but was crushed back into place.

The situation was all too clear. An enraged voice was threatening to open fire upon any person who missed a question. The two men clawed and e l b o w e d their way through the pack at one approach to the open door at the head of the stair, dropping abrupt orders of "Clear out. Get out of here. Leave the building." The bodies moved only when pushed and shoved.

"Where the hell is Bettman?" Condrip said hoarsely to Banning. "Anyone of these mothers' sons is likely to get his head blown off."

They were through. The last blockers were aside and the view lay open to them into the long way to the platform at the head of the class on which, at his desk, sat McBride, railing furiously at a class dumb with fear. He was holding a pistol in his right hand, shaking, pointing now at this student, now at that, to emphasize words with the loathsome care-

lessness of a crazed rattlesnake striking indifferently.

"Look at him, that poor devil," Banning gasped sickly. "The poor bastard's lost his wits."

"We've got to get to him—and now." Condrip jerked a look about for other men. There was Bryson on the far side of the door. He'd be too long getting through. The rest were boys. They didn't know their danger: bullets could easily pierce the wall, hit anyone. The two men continued to gaze to their right, feeling the walls vibrate from the fury of McBride's ranting.

Who would have thought a man of McBride's size could spew such thunder? A man who wasn't over 150 pounds. Spring air blustered innocently through the six windows—lifting McBride's hair, graying at the temples—inset along the length of wall of the long classroom, containing some seventy desks, of which more than fifty were occupied by helpless, dismayed targets. No lights had been turned on, though the daylight was lusterless. Open books stared up from the desks. Some boys still clutched pencils or pens stopped, apparently, in the very act of writing. Not a face but looked scared. One boy was noiselessly crying. McBride's chant came and went, trembling violently at each successive outry.

"—Fenlon!—*why* don't you know? Ought he to want to revenge it? What stands in his way? No—go slow—come to the point. To the point! Easy now. You smiling, Flick? Well, then, *you* say what shape the foul world takes in his mind? Speak up, man! The ghost is leagued with the devil, is tempting him to his own destruction. That's it, isn't it? Show some hands. I want to hear answers!"

McBride's head pivoted from one wall to the other. He was never still, just driven by the shocks of words pulsing out of him. He didn't appear to attend to the actual presence of any student. Then, suddenly he snatched up something from the desk. With wide eyes that suddenly narrowed, he was spouting again.

"Martin! M a s t e r s! Masterson! Matt! Matthews! Meyer! What? You *don't* know? I can't believe you were out stumbling along March Street at midnight last night. No, no. You were hunched over the books. Well?" He looked at them, the pistol hanging limp in his hand down along his trouser leg. One boy tensed as if to fly at him, but kept his seat. "Just drowning your reasons in grog down at Lefty's. Ah, see those empty seats? See them? (He pointed with the gun, then his arm fell away). Where are my men to fill 'em? Where the minds? (He straightened. His expression changed). Don't I see *you* leering behind those paper masks!"

"Maybe we'd better rush him now," Banning whispered flatly. "He's running down. He's forgotten the gun, I think."

The crowd was loosening. Down the hall, from classes still dismissing quietly, a few curious students were trying to break through the Superintendent's men, but failing. Condrip saw McBride point to the ceiling with the markbook, then fling the spiraling pages into the hall. One boy stooped for it.

"Leave it," Condrip ordered. He turned to Banning.

"I'm afraid someone will jump him. Get Phil Houser. Run, man. He's the only one can help here."

One hall-stander, hidden from McBride, was signaling a student near the door to coax him toward them

somehow. Without warning, the voice ceased raving, McBride's attention went distract; the boy near the door had made a start for him. Two classmates rose. McBride faltered at the sudden move; then a shot rang out and the bullet punctured the wall above the first attacker and kept going over the heads of gazers into the wall across the hall. Some bystanders lost heart and left quickly down the stairs, the way Banning had gone, c h o p p i n g their way through the gibbering masses below. The rest held their place. Down the hall, the last from the other classrooms quickened their step; a siren moaned not far away. Again McBride's voice rose thick.

"You stones, sullied hulks—" Suddenly the pistol sent two shots crashing through the windows' upper-sections. Splinters were falling in and out.

"Good God! What's happened to Harry?" Philip Houser's v o i c e choked. Condrip pivoted to him.

"He's gone out of his head, Phil. We've got to get that gun away from him."

By now, more faculty men had gained places, as more students were being led quietly out, some very much against their wills, by the Superintendent's men. But one boy in the class stood up suddenly and started to shout incoherently himself. McBride started down towards him.

"Let me through." It was Houser's voice. He split Banning and Condrip as he broke through, nearly upsetting them both.

"Harry, leave the boy be," Houser cried out, but calmly, walking in as though he were visiting. McBride started and turned on him.

"Get out of here. Get out of here. Leave my student to me. You're interfering. Get out."

"Do you know me?" Houser was still walking steadily towards the dais. "Do you know me, Harry? I just want a word with you. It's Phil—Phil Houser."

"What?"

At once the class as a body rose out of their desks. A blue uniform had appeared outside the door. Condrip blocked its way.

McBride was standing towering on the dais, the pistol pointed directly at Houser's chest. The pistol went off, the slug flying through the ceiling, stripping plaster above a six-foot student holding the arm in the air with the gun at the end of it, and still holding it when Houser reached them. The gun came loose easily, and Houser, supporting the ranting man where he was, socked one frenzied student who had begun to punch at McBride's face, cursing. The tearful, panicked boy disappeared out the door.

Then the door space filled as bodies rushed one after another into the room. McBride was blinking and holding onto Houser's arms. Houser pushed past the policeman with McBride leaning heavily upon his shoulder.

"All over," Banning said. "Get the wagon." Houser stared several seconds at him. Then he turned back and addressed Condrip.

"I'll take him home." He turned to the stammering McBride. "Come on, old soldier." The room cleared behind the staggering two, leaving George Banning looking for a sign from Frank Condrip, who stood shakily at the head of an empty, ringing classroom. Behind him an indistinguishable phrase had been scribbled

on the blackboard. The torn roll book he'd been handed in the hall lay open in his palm.

The campus had cleared rapidly. Students were convening in the cafeteria and game room for feverish talk. With the funneled roll book still in his hand, President Condrip and companion walked into the sweet May gust that crossed the fertilized flower beds and reseeded lawns between Administration and Reeves Halls.

"Poor devil," Banning echoed. "What gets into a man that—" Condrip interrupted him. "The Council voted last March to raise his rank, but he refused to take it."

"Refused?"

"He told us he'd let us know when he had earned a promotion."

"Poor devil wasn't right even then." Banning was visibly perspiring. "I think I could use a drink."

They passed into the building and moved directly up the corridor. Someone in a feathered hat stuck a camera in their faces and snapped it. A light flared and disappeared. Miss Tifford met them, holding the door open. She was frowning nervously and at first could not speak.

"Did—Did he shoot anyone?"

"He's all right now."

"What happened?"

"Mr. Houser has taken him home."

"Oh." Miss Tifford sat down bewildered. The two men brushed by another cameraman, who found the door shut in his face. A lock turned.

Inside, the President took his chair and swung around in time to see Banning empty a shot glass, spilling half of it, in haste, down his white shirt front. The stain looked like blood. Banning was spluttering, trying to say something. Settling, he refilled his glass, but this time pushed it half smiling toward Condrip, who was silent.

"Too bad it had to come right after word on the new gym. Here, drink it down. Do you good."

"Get out," Condrip said.

"Get out?" The words finally came home to him, and then were repeated, this time with a definite threat thickening the tone. Banning got up and smoothed back his hair.

"Have that drink, President Condrip," he said apologetically over his shoulder. "Things'll look better tomorrow morning." The lock turned, the door opened and shut. Miss Tifford said something. Then the outer door closed.

Condrip coughed. He reached over and took the brimming glass and, hesitating a moment, poured the contents down his throat. Tomorrow? Better? The image of the two forms stumbling together down the concrete steps leading off the campus pressed back into his vision. Houser had done it. A good man, Houser. Ought to be considered for a promotion. An asset to the college. A good-looking man, not bad posture, diplomatically gray. Yes, not a bad speaker when his heart was in it. Popular man. Of course, the rest of the Council would have to be in on it too. Still, he would put Houser up for it. How to phrase it? Above and beyond the call— No. That was the soldier's citation. Got to be sensible. Still, there was a firearm—

Already, President Condrip felt better. He'd apologize to Banning tomorrow.

The intercom spoke.

"Mr. Finley of the Millers Founda-

tion here to see you. It's 2:30, Doctor Condrip." Condrip looked at the bottles.

"Give me a few seconds with these papers, then send Mr. Finley right in, Miss Tifford," he said cheerfully toward the box. Then he quickly stowed the bottles. Perhaps there was a scent left in the air. No matter. Not a bad aroma. Mr. Finley would understand.

Condrip met his caller at the door. Yes, a prosperous-looking man; athletic too, no doubt a gym man himself. Both men smiled broadly and clasped hands manfully, then found very comfortable seats.

Outside, the campus was nearly empty, the classrooms vacant. The President cancelled the last two classes that afternoon. No reason was given.

The Sleepwalker

• **Charles Edward Eaton**

There, the swimmer, crumpled in a bag
Of bronze! Do you remember the tent pole
He was, casting a whole canvas of light?
He is a remnant now, a tawny rag
Of slack distension in the soul.
Shall we try to set him upright?

Nothing matters but supports,
Men standing in a basic place.
The world seems flattened on its face
When anyone so passively aborts.

Lend him there a pair of shoulders—
He may be sleeping in the sun.
No one wants a Hercules unsexed—
Our circus-love of him still smoulders:
The acrobat of life, supine,
Is like an *idée fixe*, unfixed.

I saw him first. No. *You* saw him first.
He must rise out of himself just as he
fell,
Glitter in his cloth, refuse to tell
Which one was so hallucinated, so accursed.

Thicker Than Water

• J. F. Hopkins

Blood appeared on his jowl.

"Damn," said Francis Hedley. He put down his razor to examine the cut. It proved to be more a series of small nicks than one cut.

"You ought to be more careful," said Sally Hedley. The Hedleys were sharing the small bathroom. Sally was in her slip and using, with the sink unavailable, the faucets of the tub.

"I was careful," said Francis. "It's this damn illumination. Or the lack of it."

There was no lighting fixture above the mirror. By and large, their apartment was comfortable, but it was old-fashioned and there were inconveniences.

Francis applied witch hazel.

"Isn't there a styptic pencil in there somewhere?" asked Sally.

"There very well could be, but I have no intention of using it, if there is."

"We might as well get rid of it, then, if you're never going to use it."

"Let's not look now. God knows what would tumble down on us."

Later, in the bedroom, when Francis was searching for the proper shirt, he said, "It doesn't look so bad, does it?" He gave her a sidewise view of his face, the skin stretched taut.

"Nobody will ever notice," she said.

"Good. That's the last thing I want. To walk in there with my face hacked up."

He withdrew a white shirt from the bureau drawer. "Those ads that say 'Never wear a white shirt before sundown'—they don't have anything to say about the protocol at funeral parlors, do they?"

She continued to fuss with her hair before the mirror and didn't answer. He took her silence for disapproval. Something short of a rebuke. But he was damned if he was going to put on a long face simply because his father was dead. Did she want him to be a hypocrite? She was acquainted with all the facts of the case. Many a Saturday night had become Sunday morning, as he had talked on and on about when he was a kid.

"I don't know what to do about a tie," he said. "How's this one?" The tie he held up had a small, dark, neat pattern.

"You have a black one, don't you?" she asked.

"Of course I have a black one. You've seen me wear it. I got it when Aunt Betty died."

"Wear it. I think that's the tie you should wear."

"And be a hypocrite?"

"It's not being a hypocrite, dear. It's the thing you ought to do."

He felt the urge to bait her leave him, the trait in himself that he so despised. It was especially unfair of him to play that game tonight, of all nights. He knew she would feel obliged to disregard his every meanness because of the circumstances. For a moment, he was tempted to say something that would show he cared for her. The moment passed and he did not say it, but the urge to lure her on into an argument did not return.

"I'd feel like one, wearing a black tie," he said. "But I guess I should. I shouldn't go at all, if I'm going to flout the conventions."

He took out the black tie. He knew that she was relieved and was making an effort not to reveal that she was.

"How do I look?" she asked.

Her plain, dark brown suit met with his approval. Anyone who knew anything would know it hadn't come out of a bargain basement. He insisted that she patronize the better shops.

"O.K.," he said. He liked to think he had a reputation for saying what he meant. He would not descend to flattery. Neither before their wedding day nor after had he ever told her she was attractive. He did admire her figure and from time to time reminded her of his high opinion of it.

"I'll feel peculiar," she said. "I've never even seen these people."

"Be damn few of them that I'll recognize, after all these years. His brother—I should be able to recognize him."

"I wouldn't even know your father —unless there's some strong resemblance."

"There isn't. I take after the O'Donovans. But I have the same general build. But you'll know what he looked like when you see his brother. You could almost take them for twins. But actually they were quite different."

"How?"

"My mother always liked his brother, Philip. The only member of the family she did like. Their mother didn't even go to their wedding, you know—my father and mother's. The difference in religion business. But she's always had a kind word to say for Philip."

"You still haven't told me how they were different."

"Well, as I remember it, Mother said my father was jealous of Philip. The best job he ever had was working for Philip and it used to gnaw at him, having to work for his brother. Philip was damn good to him, too. All this was during the Depression. A hell of a time to be choosy. But my old man left in a huff, after some silly argument, and went with another outfit. That didn't last long. He was out on his can in a matter of months. Philip would have taken him back, too. But the old man preferred to have my mother support him than go back to work for his brother. Not that that lasted long either."

"That's when they split up?"

"He walked out on her."

"Your mother's not coming up for this, is she?"

"Good God, no. Not even if she were able. Why the hell should she? She doesn't owe him anything. Absolutely nothing. I don't either, when you come right down to it. But he *is* my father." He noticed her look of concern. "What are you worried about?"

"I was just thinking. Aren't we apt to get a pretty cold reception?"

"You let me worry about that."

She didn't look reassured. "There won't be a scene, will there?" she asked.

He laughed confidently. "If there's a scene, I'll be the principal character. I can promise you that."

It pleased him to see her so concerned. She was looking at him intently, as though determining whether he was indeed serious. Was it a Pensylvania Dutch trait, to be so uncertain whether words were to be taken literally?

There would be no reason to be

ashamed of her appearance anyway. The brown suit set her off very nicely. She might not be good-looking but there was her figure, and that smooth, blemish-free skin didn't hurt. There wouldn't be many women there tonight with skin like Sally's. Lipstick the only makeup she used.

"You will try to keep anything unpleasant from happening, won't you?" she asked.

"To a point. I'm not going there with a chip on my shoulder, but if I find somebody with one on theirs, I won't hesitate to knock it off. I'm not Irish for nothing, you know."

"You're not *all* Irish. Your father's people weren't Irish."

"Maybe that's what's wrong with them. Are you ready?"

A typical woman in that respect. Had she ever been ready when he was?

"Just a second."

"A second?"

Any other night she would have told him not to be so impatient.

"I'm sure they made the arrangements without giving any thought to our convenience," he said. "It's sheer luck we live so close."

At last she was ready.

"You really aren't as bad as most women," he said. "I just like to kid you. But it is a fact that you're never ready when I am."

It was no more than a five-minute walk to the funeral director's. Had it been ten minutes longer they would have taken a cab. It was cold, for Philadelphia in mid-November. The strong wind made it seem colder and Francis pulled his hat down farther to thwart it. He hadn't forgotten the time the wind sent it sailing down Chestnut Street and a man twice his age snatched it on the fly, like a baseball player.

"I don't know why we stay here," he said.

"Maybe they'll have a branch office *down there* someday."

Down there had meant Miami Beach ever since their honeymoon.

"With me to head it—as long as we're engaging in fantasy."

"Don't be too sure things won't work out that way."

"They're slightly more likely to send me to Syracuse. And you know what? I wouldn't turn it down."

"You'd be crazy if you did."

They slowed down some doors away from the funeral director's. They had passed it countless times in their walks around the neighborhood. It wasn't only the sign that made the four-story white brick building conspicuous. The brick that stretched east and west from either side of it to the ends of the block was red.

Francis Hedley stepped behind his wife and took her elbow. He was reassured by the smartness of her hat as they went up the steps.

"This is it," he said.

A member of the staff, stationed inside the door, held it open. A face Francis had seen before. He remembered seeing the man standing around outside. Probably drove the hearse. Then he remembered having seen him sitting behind the wheel of a limousine at the curb.

Francis had been prepared to give the name *Hedley*. But tonight there was evidently only the one viewing. A blind man, guided by the aroma of the flowers, would have made the proper turn.

At first, things seemed a blur to Francis Hedley. He held on to his wife's elbow. He knew, without consciously looking for it, that his father's coffin was to his left. That would

place it in the front of the room, which appeared narrow only because of its extreme length. Immediately going over to his father's coffin didn't seem the right thing to do. Was the lighting so bright that he couldn't make out the faces of these people? He had the impression that they were all looking at him. If they weren't all looking at him, they were certainly all aware of him. He still couldn't focus on them. But he had the knowledge of the blindfolded child in blindman's buff that everyone in the game knew his exact position.

Then at last a face took shape. It did so instantaneously, as though the matter of his seeing had been subject to push-button control and he had suddenly stabbed at the right button. The face was the one he had been certain he would recognize, Philip Hedley's. Philip was moving towards them. He had probably been obscured, Francis decided, by the people he had been with, two of them, judging from the family resemblance, were Philip's sisters. Francis had only the vaguest recollection of them.

Philip wasn't smiling, yet he appeared friendly.

"This will be my father's brother, Philip," Francis said to Sally. "I told you about him." Even as he said it he knew it was a silly thing to say.

"Frank," Philip Hedley said, extending his hand, "it's good to see you."

"Philip," Francis murmured, conscious that he hadn't called him uncle.

Philip turned to Sally.

"My wife," Francis said. "This is Philip, my father's brother, Sally."

"Mrs. Hedley."

"Mr. Hedley."

Philip's manner—that was one of the differences between Philip and his father. When Francis had tried to recall them, in an effort to answer Sally's question, his memory balked. But now, exchanging the amenities with Philip, he remembered the manner that was so different from his father's. A sort of subdued graciousness that his father didn't have.

"Frank, I knew you the moment I saw you," said Philip. "I was wondering whether I would. But I did, the moment I saw you."

Had he also been wondering whether he would show up at all? That would have been interesting, listening in on him and his sisters and perhaps his wife—casting their ballots. If anybody in that gang had predicted that he would attend, it would have been Philip.

"I was wondering whether I'd recognize you, too," said Francis. "And I did, right away—once I saw you."

A woman was approaching them. She had been with Philip's sisters. Francis deduced that it was Philip's wife, although she looked even less familiar to him than the sisters. There was no family resemblance to help out. But her height—That came back to him. As a child he had spent two or three weekends with the Philip Hedleys. Her height had impressed him. Taller than her husband and, of course, his father. The brothers had been the same size.

"Don't say you remember me," the woman said. "You couldn't possibly."

"But I do," Francis said. "You're Philip's wife."

"You're marvelous!" she said.

He knew it wasn't sarcasm. If he was right, she wasn't the kind to resort to it.

She took Sally's hand in both of hers. "I'm Florence. And you must

be a Hedley. If you don't know a person's name here tonight, it's a fair guess that it's Hedley. I think Phil said Frank married a Sally, am I not right? Then we have something in common. We both married into the Hedley tribe. Tell me, is Frank a typical Hedley? The men don't talk much and they all marry talkative women."

"We don't have much of a chnce to talk," said Philip.

"Sally holds her end up, especially on the telephone," said Francis.

"Oh, I do not."

Had he placed himself with the Hedley men, saying what he did? There would be more than one corpse in the room if his mother should walk in and find him going beyond the requirements of formal politeness, actually engaging in badinage with a Hedley.

"If you remember me, you must remember Bob," said Florence Hedley. "You two played together as kids. Where is Bob anyway?" she asked her husband.

Good God, yes. Bob. Played together as kids? Hardly, except for those two or three times at their place and maybe a couple of times at their grandmother's. Again, he had a recollection of a height well above the average. Of a kid much taller than himself, though they were the same age, give or take a month or two.

"He must have stepped out for a minute," said Philip Hedley, twisting about and looking into the adjacent room.

"What's Bob doing these days?" asked Francis.

"He's a librarian," said Florence. "And just loves it."

"That's nice," said Francis. "I take it he must be quite a reader."

"Everything he can get his hands on," said Florence. "But not on the job. Or at least that's what he tells his father and me."

What else could he do in a library but read? In between stamping books in and out.

"Is Bob married?" Francis asked.

"No girl has carried him off yet," said Florence. "But who can tell what's happening out there in Toledo?"

"Toledo?"

"That's the way we felt when he told us. I didn't think I was hearing right. 'Why do you have to go to Toledo to work in a library?' I said. 'If the one in Philadelphia is good enough for your Uncle Lloyd, it ought to be good enough for you. Now if you wanted to work in a scales factory, I could understand why.' That's what I told him. But off he went anyway. I think there must be a girl there he met in college."

"Was that what my father—I mean, at the time of his death he was employed as a librarian?"

"Well, as I understand it," said Philip, "he wasn't considered that in the table of organization and so forth. He didn't have the right piece of paper. Your father knew a great deal about books but you know the trend today—A college degree is coming to mean what a high school diploma used to mean. When your father and I were growing up, not many fellows finished high school I can tell you."

"Oh, here's Bob," said Florence. She motioned him over.

He was more his mother's son than his father's. It wasn't just the height, three or four inches over six feet, the generous build. The shambling walk, the large eyes, weren't Hedley characteristics. Francis made a quick assessment of his cousin's potential as

a businessman. Bob Hedley, Francis decided, would be well advised to stick to library work.

Francis was the first to put out his hand. He refrained from exerting all the pressure of which he was capable but satisfied himself that if he were so inclined he could make Bob Hedley wince.

"I understand you live in Toledo," said Francis. "How did you get here? Fly?"

"Eh? Oh, yes. I flew. I took the train to Detroit and flew from there."

"I don't think you can beat flying. We flew down to Miami—my mother and I—a couple of years ago. There was snow on the ground when we left here. In fact, we were afraid the flight would be c a n c e l l e d. The sky looked—ominous—as though it would start to snow again any second, but we took off and in three hours or so we stepped off the plane in Miami and it was like a spring day there. Of course, we stayed at the Beach. Miami itself is no treat."

"Your father liked Florida," said Philip. "He went down there on a Greyhound bus tour several years ago."

"Oh, he did?"

"He talked about it a good bit. It's nice he got to see it."

"It was central Florida he liked," said Bob, "especially the orange grove country around Lakeland."

"We didn't get to see that section," said Francis. "My second trip down, Sally's first, we did get up to Hollywood. That's about eighteen miles north of Miami, as I recall. They have a fabulous hotel there, as terrific as anything at the Beach."

"Uncle Lloyd—your f a t h e r—thought of retiring there, in Lakeland," said Bob. "I don't know that he went so far as to make any definite plans, but he did look into it. The cost of living and so on."

Lloyd. It took almost a conscious effort to realize that that was his father's name. There had been few times in the last seventeen years—or was it eighteen?—he had heard the name *Lloyd. My old man.* That was more like it. Or, less often, *my father.* Lloyd. Like hearing your own name after being marooned on a desert island for seventeen years. Do they mean me?

"He looks nice, doesn't he?" Bob said.

"I really haven't seen him yet."

"You haven't?"

Did he have to look so shocked? Was there some unwritten law that you had to pass judgment on the undertaker's handiwork in the first five minutes?

"I'm afraid we've been too busy talking to give Frank much of a chance to do that," said Philip Hedley. "He does look nice. I'm sure you'll be pleased, Frank." Philip took a step towards the front of the room.

Francis gratefully followed Philip's lead. He took his wife's arm and with Philip beside them they solemnly approached the coffin. Without looking, Francis knew that Philip's wife and son had hung back.

He had never felt more conspicuous. Hedleys and friends of Hedleys staring at his back. Not an O'Donovan in the crowd.

And then he was looking down at the body in the coffin. Was it the moustache he noticed first? He hadn't been prepared for the moustache. Or was it the shoes? First the moustache and then the shoes. Why should it be the shoes he found himself looking at? Then he knew. The absence of spats. He always associated spats with his father. Even during the De-

pression he had worn them. Out of a job but in season always spats and derby. Not so many derbies then but fewer spats. Philip had probably bought the shoes, unless his father had a recent pair.

The first thing they did with a dead person—closed the eyes. The closed lids failed to bring anything back. The moustache he had never seen before. Not so strange, then, that the shoes had jogged his memory, not the face.

The full head of hair, though—that was something else that registered. The fullness. The richness of the color. Auburn? Was that what his mother had called it? Or had she simply said dark brown. The only nice thing about him he could remember her ever saying. His beautiful head of hair. Well, he still had it, even in death.

"He does look very nice, Philip. He doesn't look like someone who had been ill very long."

"Well, he hadn't been, Frank, as far as we know. He simply keeled over. A colored man across the street saw him fall. He's had a shoe shine stand on that corner for years and your father was a regular customer. He—Ernie, the colored man—looked over at your father, to wave to him, and he saw him take a funny step or two and fall over. The first person to reach him was the man from the news stand with Ernie, from across the street, right behind him. Your father was evidently already dead. The rescue squad was there within minutes. Nothing could be done for him."

Francis wondered how Philip had learned these details. Philip must have gone to the scene himself and gotten the account from Ernie, whom his father must have spoken of from time to time.

"The autopsy brought that out—that nothing could be done for him," said Philip. "It's not a bad way to go, really. When my turn comes, I hope I'm as lucky."

"Well, I can only hope that he was in the state of grace," said Francis. He didn't expect Philip to know what he meant. Philip did look at him peculiarly but said nothing. Francis decided that a clarification was in order. "If I'm going to have a fatal brain hemorrhage, I'd like to get in a last confession beforehand."

"I guess God knew he was a Protestant and wouldn't object to going right away."

The mild tone disarmed Francis. He wanted to make an immediate retort but could think of none.

"Francis said you and his father looked alike," said Sally. "You do. It's a remarkable resemblance."

"Yes, I guess no one would have any trouble taking us for brothers."

"There's not a gray hair in his head," said Sally.

"That's a family trait," said Philip. "We're slow to turn gray. I guess we're not great worriers."

"The funny thing is that my mother's people do turn gray early," said Francis. "My mother was only in her twenties when her hair started turning gray."

"How is your mother, Frank?" asked Philip.

"She's O.K. That is, all things considered, she's doing O.K. A heart condition which cuts down on her activity pretty much. She's living in Cape May now with her sister and doesn't get out much, but she likes it down there."

"That's good. Be sure to give her my regards."

They moved away from the coffin. Philip steered them over to where

his two sisters were sitting. They were spinsters, Francis recalled. It was likely that they still were. Both were older than the brothers. One must have been a good bit older. Eventually even the Hedleys turned gray.

The sisters were polite, formally polite, but that was all he had wanted from them. Certainly not cordiality. Better hostility than cordiality. If he were alone with Sally, he would have said, "Well, we made it." But there were other people that Philip wanted him to meet. They all seemed to remember him as a child. To him they weren't even the faintest of echoes. He made no pretense of remembering them. They couldn't be so obtuse as to expect him to. He probably hadn't been more than four or five since he had last seen some of them. Of course they weren't so obtuse. They smiled and shook his hand and when introduced to Sally made jokes about the crazy kind of family she had married into. It was as though he were one of them, that there had never been an estrangement between him and his father. Between him and his father's family. Didn't they hold anything against him? He hadn't even attended his grandmother's viewing nor her funeral. He had completely disregarded his father's telegram notifying him of her death.

She had been a frail little thing. Just as he had recalled Florence Hedley's great height, he recalled his grandmother's smallness. What else was there to r e m e m b e r ? Black clothes. There was a black shawl that he remembered. And the canned peas that he liked so much better than the fresh ones he had at home. An amusing comment on his childhood knowledge of food, he supposed, that he had preferred the canned. A preference that was related, perhaps, to his father's insistence that he help prepare the vegetables when he came in from school. Not until they were ready could he go out to play. That was a memory for you. Sitting across from the old man, a bowl between them, both of them shelling peas. Was it silently? What had they ever talked about? He couldn't remember a single conversation. A single remark. A single word. Why wouldn't his grandmother's canned peas taste better? Even so, he hadn't minded doing the peas as much as the lima beans. There was something repellent about the lima bean pods. A fuzziness that the pea pods didn't have. And doing the peas seemed more rewarding. More peas to the pod.

The old man admonishing him for gouging out too much of the potato in digging out the eyes. Floodgates weren't opening—there was no deluge of memories. They came in spurts, one leading to another, despite the intervals. I might as well be on a psychiatrist's couch, he thought. What would a psychiatrist have made of it?—peas, lima beans, potatoes. They weren't symbolic—they hadn't appeared in dreams. They might as well be in the palm of his hand, to do with as he chose. To put away or examine with care. There was only the one condition: he could never give them away. They were his forever, as the packages of frozen foods in the supermarkets would never be.

A hard taskmaster, the old man. An ironical term, *old man*. How old had the old man been, sitting there shelling peas, insisting that the schoolboy join him and do his bit? In his thirties somewhere. The latter half. Very demanding for an unemployed. His sense of guilt had bullied him into it no doubt. He had had to find

a way of conning himself into thinking he didn't stand in the debt of Nora O'Donovan Hedley. Wasn't he fulfilling brilliantly the role of father to the son, so lacking in a sense of responsibility?

The arithmetic problems! Lord, how could he forget them? They were worse than the vegetables—worse than anything the teacher in school assigned. Had the old man been working then? Probably not. Maybe he was. Francis remembered finding the problems laid out for him on the sideboard, to be done and to be done correctly before he went out to play. The old man must have been working then because when he wasn't, he was always hanging around the apartment when Francis got back from school. So he was very demanding whether working or not. Knocked the one theory out.

What was this one's name? Bechtler. He had looked it up in the directory after the telephone call. Not immediately after. Would he ever get over that shock? Not one twinge of regret but the shock was no less for that. The explosion of an assumption he had never questioned: his father would live on and on, surviving at the very least the woman for God knows what reason he had asked to marry him. Would live on and on as a source, if not trouble, of potential trouble.

That man's first name was Carl.

Philip must have done his duty by all the relatives. No one had been introduced as the husband, wife, son, or daughter of a Hedley for some time. He had been prepared to meet a slew of Hedleys, provided the things didn't prove a quick fiasco, just as he had been prepared to more than hold his own if it did. Francis had no doubt that it was Philip who had set the course. Everybody concerned was probably grateful, after the fact, if not before. Sally's relief must be enormous. He hoped she wouldn't make too big a thing of it later. He'd have come off well regardless of how it went, and he hoped she knew it.

But these people he was shaking hands with now—friends and acquaintances of his father—he hadn't been prepared for that. The lawyer, Bechtler, that was only a minor surprise. His father certainly hadn't been making a lawyer rich.

The others—the friends and acquaintances—all these years he hadn't thought of his father having them. Not that he thought he didn't have them. It was a matter of not giving the matter a thought and then being surprised, here tonight, to learn that he had. So absurd to be surprised. Human beings are gregarious. And the world being what it is there was no reason for a man who walked out on his wife and child to experience difficulty finding another of his own kind and forming a beautiful friendship. There were probably clubs for such men about the city where they could cry on one another's shoulder and justify what they did. Why wouldn't they mourn the death of a fellow club member? A thinning of the ranks, when you got to be his father's age. The well of sympathy drying up.

There was a very old man talking to him now. He must be eighty or more. One of the few people who had walked up and introduced themselves. Philip, having excused himself, had joined someone else. Florence had Sally in tow.

Damn it, what was his name? He had said it clearly enough. But it hadn't registered, and his opening remarks might as well have been ut-

tered in French. Keeping an eye on both Philip and Sally, Francis only pretended that the old man had his attention. Still, not listening was a bad habit—a point emphasized in the company training program. Francis concentrated.

"We had a loyal group in those days," the old man was saying. "There wasn't enough money for staff or books but we got by. And we had something I think the new crowd lacks. They have the degrees and the salary scales and the fancy pension plans, but what they don't have is a love of books. That's what your father had—a love of books. Technically, he wasn't a librarian. By today's standards, I wasn't either." The old man chuckled. Francis was uncomfortable, not knowing what the joke was. "Your father and I had a lot in common, young man, despite the disparity in age."

The old man paused and looked at him as though what he saw in Francis's face would determine what he would say next. Francis had the uncomfortable sensation that he had been found wanting.

"Do you ever go to the library on the Parkway, the central library? I was going to suggest that you look in on my successor, Mr. Keyes, and mention that you're Lloyd Hedley's son. Say you met me and I made the suggestion. But from what I've heard he's not as accessible as I was. More on the go, you know. He's very active in the library association—the American Library Association. God knows, I was never that. But possibly you don't often get to the central library anyway—"

"I'm ashamed to say it, but I've never been there."

"You've never been there?"

"Oh, I've intended to go. It's just one of those things. I don't doubt it's a wonderful institution."

"You watch yourself now. You may find yourself going through the turnstile and becoming one of Mr. Keyes's statistics. He's very figure-conscious. Good publicity, you know. Say, I wonder whether you can do something for me. Lloyd had a nephew who became a librarian. He must be here tonight, isn't he? Have you met him? Can you pick him out of this crowd for me?"

Francis looked about him and almost immediately saw his cousin, apparently, like himself, a captive audience. Bob Hedley was leaning over a little old woman in black whose appearance reminded Francis of Grandmother Hedley, but he associated his grandmother with saying very little and this little old woman was obviously a talker.

"That's my father's nephew," said Francis, "the tall fellow that woman's talking to. The little woman in black."

"Oh, yes." The old man pulled out his watch. "I at least want to introduce myself before I leave." He stepped closer to Francis. "I know how things were between you and your dad," he said. He had lowered his voice. "He wasn't one for discussing his affairs, but the subject did come up from time to time, and I know he felt very bad about the turn of events. Too bad he died before you had a chance to patch things up. Still, that's the way life is. If it was all we'd like it to be, it wouldn't be life."

The old man reached out and gave Francis a sharp squeeze on the upper arm. "Don't fret, young fellow. He wouldn't want you to."

Of all the damnable gall! The old fellow had moved off. Francis looked after him, debating whether to catch up with him and tell him off. If the

old man were a Hedley, he wouldn't have hesitated. It was the kind of Hedley insolence he had been on the alert for. But from this unexpected source—

A motion from Sally caught his eye. She patted the seat of the folding chair beside her.

He got a grip on himself. He supposed you had to make allowances for the very old. He'd have blasted a Hedley, old or young. The man's round shoulders were still in sight. Let him go. Save the righteous indignation for a Hedley. He joined his wife.

"What's wrong, honey?" she asked.

"What makes you think anything is?"

She didn't need to answer. She gave the look that meant You know better than to ask that question. After a party, she could always tell him which remarks had annoyed him even though he had let them pass unchallenged. It was customary that she congratulate him on his restraint.

"Some old fool said something out of order," said Francis. "I came pretty close to telling him off."

"I'm glad you didn't."

"He wasn't a Hedley," said Francis. He saw the fleeting look of concern. "Nobody can hear me," he said.

"Did you see the woman with beautiful white hair?" asked Sally.

"Where is she?"

"I don't see her now. She walked right by you when you were talking to that old man."

He shook his head. "I don't think I noticed her."

"She reminded me of your mother. Not that there was a startling resemblance. It was the hair, I guess, and the same care about appearance."

"Well, it wasn't my mother. You can bet your bottom dollar on that."

Philip Hedley, excusing himself, worked his way past the people sitting on their row. He leaned forward to speak with Francis.

"Frank, had you planned to come to the funeral tomorrow?"

"Yes," said Francis. "I was planning on renting a limousine. I can make arrangements for that here tonight, can't I?"

"No reason for you to do that," said Philip. "We'll have plenty of room in our car and we'd like to have you."

Francis moved over to let Philip sit down between himself and Sally.

Why not? He immediately thought of his mother and what she would think of the idea. He looked at Sally.

"That's very nice of you," he said. "Are you sure it wouldn't—"

"Not at all. In my old age, I have a big Chrysler and it can accommodate six people very comfortably and we'll only have five. Bob will be along. In fact, I think I'll let him chauffeur us. I'm not as young as I used to be. It's a long drive."

A long drive? What did he mean a long drive?

"Oh, I guess I didn't tell you," said Philip. "Your father will be buried in the family lot in Willistown. Do you remember Willistown? I think you were there as a child."

"Yes," said Francis. "I remember it." Remember was hardly the word. What he remembered was not Willistown but the fact of having been there. No courthouse, no stately mansions, no statues. Nothing associated with Willistown had stayed with him. Except for the woods. He and his father had taken a walk in the woods. They had left a large house behind them. Probably a farmhouse. They had gone down to Willistown for a funeral. God knows whose.

"He—my father—was born down there, wasn't he?"

"No, he was born in Philadelphia. The rest of us were, but your father was the youngest and he was born in Philadelphia."

"Oh." It must sound to Sally as though he knew damn little about his father.

"Well, then, Frank, it's all settled. We'll see you in the morning and you'll drive down with us."

Philip got up and Francis slid over beside his wife.

"I think I'll take another look at him," said Francis. "Then we'll leave. It's time to leave anyhow."

Alone, he went to the coffin. Making sure that he didn't move his lips, he recited an Act of Contrition. He'd do that much for anyone. His father's hands were clasped. No rosary beads, of course. His father hadn't even been much of a Protestant.

He had observed some people touch his father's hand. Others had touched his sleeve. He wasn't about to do either. What a hypocritical thing that would be to do! He turned from the coffin and when Sally looked at him expectantly he made a slight head motion and she got up and joined him in the doorway. They were getting into their coats, the same staff member Francis had seen upon their arrival, helping Sally into hers, when he overheard a question-answer exchange behind him, the voices those of men.

"What's he doing here?"

"I don't know. Blood's thicker than water, I suppose."

Francis finished adjusting his scarf. He did not look back into the room he had left. He took Sally by the arm and guided her towards the door. Before they reached it, Philip Hedley caught up to them and said something about tomorrow morning and they all said goodnight. Francis was very stiff.

"Don't get angry, honey," said Sally, on the sidewalk, "but that was no reason for you to be rude to your uncle—what those two boors said."

Francis didn't answer until they were again inside their apartment. "You know something? I don't blame them for wondering."

Dandelions

• **Gordon Gilsdorf**

Spring, hurrying to our land, last night
Stumbled in the darkness shouldering my door
And spilled a hoard of minted light.
Each flower glitters on the morning floor
Like a precious widow's mite.

Tomorrow the wind in its pulpit must
Preach with a text of Christ in its throat,
Fingering coins that tarnish and rust,
That rise like a cloud of moths and float
Away to live in the dust.

Contributors

MONTY CULVER teaches the writing of fiction at the University of Pittsburgh, where he is an associate professor in the English department; he has had stories in *Atlantic* and *Esquire* and at present is finishing his first novel. SAMUEL HAZO, poet and member of the English staff at Duquesne University, has written a study of the poetry of Hart Crane, whom he regards as "one of the more important American poets of this century." JUDI CHAFFEE grew up in New York, but now lives in Philadelphia, where she is editorial assistant of *Eternity* magazine; she has "had a few poems published and some short fiction pieces in 'parable' form." This is her first published short story. THOMAS F. SMITH holds degrees from the University of Connecticut and a doctorate from Pittsburgh. The article on Henry James is his first essay to be published. EDWARD MORIN, an instructor at the University of Cincinnati, has been essay editor, associate editor, and managing editor of *Chicago Review*. MADELEINE COSTIGAN is a graduate of the College of Chestnut Hill; she has had her writing published in various magazines about gardening; she is married to a lawyer in Philadelphia and is the mother of four children. SUZANNE GROSS, poet and teacher in the Midwest, has had her poems published in previous issues of **four quarters.** CHARLES EDWARD EATON, a frequent contributor to this magazine, spent the late winter and early spring "reading from his book of poems, *Countermoves,* at Duke University and the University of North Carolina." J. F. HOPKINS, who had a story in **four quarters** recently, writes this about himself: "I completed the first draft of a novel in April, 1963. This is more accurate than saying I completed a novel, but is nonetheless misleading. I write slowly and revise constantly. In my case, there is no such thing as a first draft, if by that term one means an unrevised manuscript to which the writer will return and whip into final shape. I wish that were my way—to write a thing straight through and then set about the job of getting it just right. I try to make it just right from the first sentence to the last, and invariably fail." GORDON GILSDORF is on the faculty of Sacred Heart Seminary in Wisconsin. RICHARD E. FITZGERALD teaches courses in the writing of the short story at La Salle College, where he is an assistant professor in the English department.

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